

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A playback apparatus for receiving and playing back a plurality of pieces of video information delivered via a network, the apparatus comprising:

5 a plurality of decoder modules for decoding the plurality of pieces of video information;

 a scenario management section for reading a playback scenario where playback information regarding the plurality of pieces of video information is described, for
10 determining a playback schedule according to the playback information, and for exercising distribution of the plurality of pieces of video information among the plurality of decoder modules and switching control over output from the plurality of decoder modules;

15 an output switching section for switching output from the plurality of decoder modules under the switching control;

 a communication handling section for making a request via the network to deliver the playback scenario, receiving the playback scenario via the network, making a
20 request via the network to deliver the plurality of pieces of video information, and receiving the plurality of pieces of video information via the network; and

 an output section for outputting the plurality of
25 pieces of video information.

2. The playback apparatus according to claim 1,

wherein the scenario management section determines the playback schedule so that the temporally adjacent pieces of video information will be played back by the different decoder modules.

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3. The playback apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the scenario management section selects the plurality of decoder modules which decode the plurality of pieces of video information on the basis of initialization
10 time each of the plurality of decoder modules takes to change from an initial state to a state in which each of the plurality of decoder modules can output the plurality of pieces of video information as images and termination
15 time each of the plurality of decoder modules takes to terminate the output and to return to the initial state.

4. The playback apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the scenario management section has a coefficient store table in which the fixed values of the
20 initialization time and the termination time for each streaming server are stored and distributes the plurality of pieces of video information in advance among the plurality of decoder modules by the use of coefficient values stored in the coefficient store table.

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5. The playback apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the scenario management section has a coefficient

store table in which the initialization time and the termination time for each streaming server are updated in order by the use of measured values for the plurality of decoder modules and updates the playback schedule of the plurality of pieces of video information which are not yet displayed at the time of a coefficient value in the coefficient store table being updated.

6. The playback apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the communication handling section receives partial scenarios which are obtained by dividing the playback scenario in order of time and which are delivered in order, further wherein the scenario management section combines the partial scenarios and a scenario which has already been received and updates the playback schedule.

7. The playback apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the scenario management section starts periodically, determines a state of each of the plurality of decoder modules according to scenario time, and controls each of the plurality of decoder modules so that each of the plurality of decoder modules will make the transition to the state the scenario management section determined.

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8. The playback apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the scenario management section determines the

state on the basis of the scenario time and the playback schedule.

9. The playback apparatus according to claim 7,
5 wherein if each of the plurality of decoder modules is not
in a playback enable state in spite of the determination
that the state should be a playback state being made, the
scenario management section stops the scenario time until
each of the plurality of decoder modules makes the
10 transition to the playback enable state.

10. A playback method for receiving and playing
back a plurality of pieces of video information delivered
via a network, the method comprising the steps of:
15 reading a playback scenario in which playback
information regarding the plurality of pieces of video
information is described and which is delivered via the
network;
determining a playback schedule according to the
20 playback information; and
exercising, in accordance with the playback
schedule, distribution of the plurality of pieces of video
information among a plurality of decoder modules and
switching control over output from the plurality of
25 decoder modules.

11. A playback program for receiving and playing

back a plurality of pieces of video information delivered via a network, the program causing a computer to perform the processes of:

5 reading a playback scenario in which playback information regarding the plurality of pieces of video information is described and which is delivered via the network;

determining a playback schedule according to the playback information; and

10 exercising, in accordance with the playback schedule, distribution of the plurality of pieces of video information among a plurality of decoder modules and switching control over output from the plurality of decoder modules.

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12. A computer-readable record medium that stores a playback program for receiving and playing back a plurality of pieces of video information delivered via a network, the program causing a computer to perform the processes of:

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reading a playback scenario in which playback information regarding the plurality of pieces of video information is described and which is delivered via the network;

25 determining a playback schedule according to the playback information; and

exercising, in accordance with the playback

schedule, distribution of the plurality of pieces of video information among a plurality of decoder modules and switching control over output from the plurality of decoder modules.

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13. A video information playback system for playing back a plurality of pieces of video information delivered via a network, the system comprising:

10 a content server that stores a playback scenario in which playback information regarding the plurality of pieces of video information is described;

a streaming server that stores the plurality of pieces of video information; and

15 a client including a plurality of decoder modules for continuously playing back the plurality of pieces of video information by receiving the playback scenario and the plurality of pieces of video information via the network, by determining a playback schedule according to the playback information, and by performing, in accordance
20 with the playback schedule, distribution of the plurality of pieces of video information among the plurality of decoder modules and the switching of output from the plurality of decoder modules.